

VZCZCXYZ0003
OO RUEHWEB

DE RUEHLM #0026 0080947
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
O 080947Z JAN 08
FM AMEMBASSY COLOMBO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7444
INFO RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 4210
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 1698
RUEHCG/AMCONSUL CHENNAI 8211
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 0726
RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC
RHEHAAA/NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC

UNCLAS COLOMBO 000026

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

STATE FOR SCA/INS, USPACOM FOR FPA

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [ML](#)

SUBJECT: MALDIVIAN PRESIDENT SURVIVES ATTACK

11. (U) The Maldivian Deputy High Commissioner in Sri Lanka telephoned Ambassador on January 8 to inform us that President Gayoum had been attacked earlier in the day by an unknown Maldivian assailant with a knife during a visit by Gayoum to the island of Huvarafushi in the northern atoll of Haa-alif. The Deputy High Commissioner reported that the President had not been hurt thanks to the efforts of a young Maldivian scout and the President's own security who subdued the attacker before he reached the President. An investigation is underway to identify the assailant and ascertain his motives. The President subsequently appeared on Maldivian television to reassure the public that he was unharmed and would continue his visits to islands in the north. Ambassador asked that the Deputy High Commissioner convey to the President the relief and best wishes of the Ambassador and the United States Government that the President had not been harmed.

12. (U) Comment: President Gayoum inaugurated with the Ambassador on January 7 a combined wind and solar energy project using wind technology from the American company Southwest Windpower on the nearby island of Uligama (septel). The President told Ambassador that since he had come to the north for this ceremony, he would use the opportunity to visit neighboring islands to meet the local island leaders and people. Ambassador remarked to the President's staff that the President took the trouble to shake the hand of every islander who waited at the dock for his arrival and that security seemed light, apart from a plain-clothes security officer next to the President. The staff reported that the President likes mingling with the people and has little to fear since Maldivians do not own firearms. Security clearly will be enhanced after this incident. Embassy will report more as details emerge.
BLAKE